

HOUSE No. 2726

By Mr. Frost of Auburn, petition of Paul K. Frost for legislation to establish a student loan repayment program within the Department of Public Health to assist doctors and nurses providing services to uninsured and low-income patients. Public Health.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Five.

AN ACT RELATIVE TO CREATING A PROGRAM TO REWARD DOCTORS AND NURSES WHO ADMINISTER HELP IN CERTAIN HEALTH FACILITIES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 Chapter 15A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2000
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by adding after section 19A
3 the following section:—

4 Section 19B. There shall be a student loan repayment program
5 for the purpose of encouraging outstanding students to enlist in
6 the doctor and nursing facilities that service uninsured and low-
7 income patients in the commonwealth by providing financial
8 assistance for the repayment of qualified education loans, as
9 defined below. The program shall be administered by the depart-
10 ment of public health in accordance with guidelines promulgated
11 by the department of public health. The program shall be subject
12 to appropriation.

13 The term “qualified education loan” shall mean any indebted-
14 ness including interest on such indebtedness incurred to pay
15 tuition or other direct expenses incurred in connection with the
16 pursuit of an undergraduate or graduate degree by an applicant,
17 but shall not include loans made by any person related to the
18 applicant.

19 The council shall promulgate guidelines governing the
20 attracting excellence in the doctor and nursing profession pro-
21 gram. These guidelines shall include the following provisions:

22 (1) Eligibility for the program shall be limited to persons who
23 have graduated in the top 15 per cent of their undergraduate
24 classes or who have graduated with honors designations, as certi-
25 fied by the institution attended by any such applicant;

26 (2) Eligibility shall be limited to persons entering the doctor or
27 nursing profession after July 1, 2005 who have signed a contract
28 stating that they will work full time in a health clinic, established
29 doctor's office or medical facility that treats patients who are
30 uninsured, or low-income. These specific facilities will be
31 deemed by the Public Health department;

32 (3) The commonwealth shall repay a participating doctor's or
33 nurse's student loan at a rate not to exceed \$150.00 per month for
34 a period not to exceed 48 months;

35 (4) Repayment shall be made to the participating doctor or
36 nurse annually upon the presentation by the participating doctor or
37 nurse of satisfactory evidence of payments under the loan, as well
38 as satisfactory service to the commonwealth through medical
39 facilities that treat low-income or uninsured patients;

40 (5) Payments by the commonwealth shall cover only loan pay-
41 ments made by the participating doctor or nurse in the months
42 during which the participating doctor or nurse practices in the
43 commonwealth;

44 (6) The program will be limited to doctors and nurses who
45 practice in health care facilities designated by the department of
46 public health as caring for low-income or uninsured patients.

47 Expenses for administration of the program may be retained in
48 an interest bearing trust fund to be established by the department
49 of public health and expended for the costs of administering the
50 program without further appropriation, and any funds remaining
51 in the trust at the termination of the program shall be returned to
52 the General Fund.